

POLITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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for the rape of Tripoli is particularly cold-blooded. "I had for some time reflected on the Lybian question," he writes, "with the firm intention of solving it at the first opportunity.

If we had not gone to Tripoli, some other Power would.*

His picture of the Foreign Minister and himself, who alone were in the secret, spending the summer of 1911 in the country "to show that nothing was in the wind," will always remain a

classical example of secret diplomacy. His maxim was limited

liability. He preferred subterranean strategy to the big stick,

and in foreign affairs he opposed ambitious objectives. He was

ready for the Tripoli adventure, because the diplomatic

preparation was complete and Turkey could not reinforce her

scanty garrisons either by land or sea. Consulted by Salandra

on the outbreak of war he advised neutrality. He disapproved

the plunge in 1915, not from tenderness for Austria, but be-

cause he disliked gambling for the highest stakes. Austria, he

argued, would make considerable sacrifices to preserve

Italian neutrality. Something could be gained at once without

the shedding of blood, and the rest would follow in due course,

since the Hapsburg Empire was doomed to dissolution by

racial discord and the stress of war. He was overruled by

Salandra, who had the secret Treaty of London in his desk, and

who has told the story of Italy's intervention in two volumes of

dramatic interest.

Poincaré's Memoirs head the list of French autobiographical

contributions to the literature of the war. An accomplished

writer, a member of the Académie Française, and a leader of

the French bar, he could state a case as well as any man of his

time. When his seven years as President of the Republic

ended in 1920, he began the most imposing apologia in French

literature since that of Ollivier. Six addresses, *Les Origines de la Guerre*, delivered and published in 1921, survey French policy from 1871 to 1914, and may be regarded as a prologue to the larger work. There is a good deal of autobiography in the second half of the book, and the picture of the voyage home from Russia in July, 1914, with wakeless messages pouring in and anxiety increasing every hour, lingers in our memory. He was greeted by the Minister of War with the words : *Vous allez voir Paris : c'est splendide*. Leaving the first fifty years of his career to his biographers, he begins his *Souvenirs* with the summons to the Premiership in January, 1912, on the morrow of the Agadir crisis. The resounding tide, *Au Service de la France*, embodies his proudest claim. If the exuberance of